



Selfie business opens on Mary Street
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Retired mining engineer Ron Simkus is hoping the town will direct some of its Balls Beach budget to addressing stormwater drainage to prevent more flooding of residential homes. (Mike Balsom)

Puppy mill house to get new tenants

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

The house at the centre of a suspected puppy mill raid last month has been leased once again.

The dock area home at 115 Delater Street was raided by Provincial Animal Welfare Service (PAWS) officials on the morning of July 14. Over the course of almost four hours more than 150 dogs were removed from the 1840-era home that had been rented by Christina Grein and Anthony Biondi back in April, 2021.

Neighbours looked on in shock and concern as cage after cage holding multiple dogs was removed by animal welfare officers and placed into vans and the Lincoln County Humane Society (LCHS) Mobile Adoption trailer. Many of them being pet owners themselves,

it was difficult for the on-lookers to believe so many dogs could have been crammed into the small house.

Last Saturday, property owner Arthur Scauzillo was busy readying the house for new tenants after leasing it out once again via NOTL Realty. A crew was stripping old shingles in preparation for a new roof while Scauzillo was inside cleaning floors, following the application of a new coat of paint on the walls.

The many window coverings that had been hiding the presence of the dogs on site had also been removed. When The Local stepped inside, the house seemed clean and easily inhabitable.

Scauzillo is still shocked that his previous tenants had been housing so

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Dock Area residents unhappy with shoreline talk

They're concerned stormwater drainage issue won't be addressed

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

A group of Dock Area residents, led by two professional engineers, are unhappy with the latest town proposal for the Balls Beach shoreline protection plan.

As a mining engineer,

Ron Simkus has spent decades working throughout the world in and around water. From his unique perch on River Beach Road, he has been compiling and sharing lake level reports since 2017. He recently sent out his 200th weekly report since flooding became a major prob-

lem along the shoreline.

The much-discussed groyne, consisting of the large rock barrier that juts out into the river at Ball's Beach to control erosion and drifting, failed to protect the beach from flooding in 2017 and again in 2019, putting a historic culvert and public infra-

structure at risk. Both incidents have been referred to as 100-year events, which have become common as climate change becomes more severe.

Simkus has been following the latest shoreline protection plan, presented Monday to council at a committee of the whole meeting, and he doesn't like what he has heard.

"The problem with this whole thing right now," Simkus says, "is that

they're asking us to abandon the stormwater program for the fifth year in a row. What's incorrect with this, is that Baird & Associates (an engineering firm from Oakville) had been working here since 2003. And the town hired Shoreplan Engineering instead. I was told that was because they had been working in the neighbourhood."

Simkus is concerned that the years of experience and data compiled by

Baird was thrown to the side when Shoreplan was brought in. He says the new contractors started from scratch, and he suspects funds earmarked to improve drainage protection for homes behind the beach area may be used to pay for the new plans.

"Five years later, the design that they (Shoreplan) are recommending looks exactly the same as

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Tony Baldinelli hoping to help guide recovery

Penny Coles
The Local

Incumbent Tory MP Tony Baldinelli says it's been his greatest honour to represent the Conservative party, and he is hoping to be elected Sept. 20 for another term in Ottawa to continue advocating for the issues of importance to residents of the Niagara Falls riding, "as I have from the beginning."

It wasn't long after this current government came to

power that the pandemic hit, and governance since then has been far from what anyone could have expected, he says. He would have liked to see this term continue, to fight for businesses and farmers, to fight for all employees' safe return to work, for Canadian borders to be treated fairly, for a clean environment, and for youth and their futures.

He's looking forward to a term of dealing with not only recovery from the devastating economic effects of the pan-

demic, but the many other issues that are important to Canadians.

He will block the Liberals on their taxation plans, and he will "fight to ensure we get through this pandemic and into a recovery, as quickly as we can."

"It is incredibly disappointing," he says, "to see that the Prime Minister has decided to put his own self-interest and that of the Liberal Party, before that of the residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Fort

Erie and Niagara Falls."

"This minority Parliament," he continued, "has been functioning for everyone but for Justin Trudeau himself. For the good of the nation and to make Parliament work for Canadians, we have properly debated and passed multiple pieces of legislation, even when opposition parties disagreed with elements of these bills. In fact, in the last five-week session of Parliament five Conservative private member's bills were passed into law, including Bill C-218, which I seconded and which has legalized single-event sports betting, for the benefit of our tourism and hospitality sector."

Soon after the 2019 election, Baldinelli says he began speaking with local grape growers and wineries, and advocated in Parliament for the exemption to the excise tax on wines.

As soon as COVID hit, he transitioned from Ottawa to working from his Niagara Falls office, on the phone every day, as were his staff, helping Canadians in need, including those who were stuck in other countries around the world, looking for ways to get home. He also fought to ensure offshore workers, so vital to the agricultural industry, would be allowed into Canada, and started advocating for seasonal workers — there are 40,000 in Niagara alone — to be eligible to receive CERB payments, pressuring successfully to have the Liberals make the program more flexible and available to more people.

In September, 2020, he was made special advisor on tourism recovery, and he continues to criticize the Liberal government for underfunding the recovery of vital importance in Niagara.

He has also worked hard

to represent the riding on other issues the communities face and are concerned most about, he says.

One of those issues that was key for Baldinelli in 2019, and remains so, is quality health care and social program funding.

He and his wife had identical twin boys born 15 weeks too early — losing one son, David, after three days, then having the other, Daniel, spend the next 136 days "on an incredible journey in hospital," to where he is today, a growing 15-year-old.

He knows first-hand just how precious life is, and how incredible the health system has been. He has spoken often of his goal, under a Conservative government, to ensure healthcare providers can deliver quick, quality services with the most up-to-date technology, he says. When Baldinelli ran in 2019, he had the support of former MP Rob Nicholson, who won the 2004 election — his second stint in Ottawa — and continued to hold his seat until he decided to retire from politics, passing the baton to Baldinelli.

Baldinelli says he has always been a Conservative, even as a high school student drawn to its values, to its support for individuals who work hard, for its support of diversity, and its financial accountability. He has been involved in politics in some capacity ever since.

After graduating from McMaster University with a bachelor's degree in political science, he went to Ottawa, and stuffed envelopes for the Conservative party.

He considers Nicholson a friend and mentor, and when the former MP was in Ottawa his first go-round, from 1984 to 1993, and had an opening for an assistant, Baldinelli got the job. Following that, he

worked at Queen's Park as a policy assistant, eventually returning home to work for the Niagara Parks Commission. He gave up his position as senior manager of communications to enter the political arena in 2019.

He says he still considers Nicholson a great resource for advice and support in his efforts to make Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake and Fort Erie the best they can be for families like his.

He also has seasoned Tory politician Bart Maves helping him.

"I've known Bart since we were eight years old. We played together when we were young. I'm looking forward to working with him on this campaign."

As in 2019, Baldinelli is up against Liberal candidate Andrea Kaiser, who came in second, and NDP Brian Barker, who also ran in the last federal election, ending in third place.

First-time candidates also representing the Niagara Falls riding are the Green Party's Melanie Holm, and Peter Taras running for the People's Party of Canada.

To reach Baldinelli's campaign office, call 905-401-4612, or email info@tony-baldinelli.ca.

His main campaign office opened Saturday in Niagara Falls, followed by volunteers setting off with Baldinelli for a Saturday afternoon super-canvas in Fort Erie.

Hopeful volunteers, supporters, and anyone looking to obtain a lawn sign are encouraged to stop by the now-open Niagara Falls office. All COVID-19 protocols are in place to ensure the safety of everyone.

His office is located at 3777 Portage Road, in Niagara Falls. He is in the process of opening offices in Fort Erie and Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Peter Taras wants freedom from pandemic for all

Penny Coles
The Local

In a nutshell, says Peter Taras, he is running for the People's Party of Canada to restore the rights and freedoms that have been taken away by government lockouts and restrictions during the pandemic, "which have been utterly disastrous."

This federal election campaign is the first time the Ridgeway greenhouse owner has ever been a political candidate. He made the decision, he says, because he wants to stand up against global Big Pharma, which he blames for being behind this pandemic.

He has a bachelor of science from the University of Toronto, and a master's degree in chemistry from York University.

He says in March 2020, when we were first learning about COVID-19, he went along with government restrictions and protocols. But by February 2021, he stopped wearing a mask and following protocols that were contributing to "mass hysteria."

That's when he decided he would run in the next election, he says.

"I needed to do something to restore freedom for our country and for Niagara," says the candidate for the riding of

Niagara Falls, which includes Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Despite contrary evidence from scientific and medical experts, he believes people should be allowed to live as dangerously as they want to, to do nothing in this pandemic if that is their choice.

He says he doesn't have a problem with vaccinations, but "even if the vaccine is the best thing ever, people should still have the right to refuse it."

"I'm committed to restoring people's freedoms, 100 per cent," he adds, so they can return to a functioning society "that makes people joyful."

Now that he knows the "disastrous effects of lockdowns and separating family members," he wants life to return not to a new normal, but the "old normal," where people are not treated like sources of contagion spreading disease, but are treated with dignity.

He refutes the advice of top doctors, which has kept changing, and says there is actually an increased number of deaths as a result of lockdowns, rather than them saving lives.

He would also like to see the defunding of the CBC and the end of any handouts for media organizations, which makes them a "mouthpiece for government."

As a husband and father of six, Taras says he believes in returning to traditional family values, including "the protection of human life from conception to natural death."

He would say no to vaccine passports and open borders immediately, would improve the treatment of elderly in long-term care homes, and encourage immigration for those who will work hard and won't expect government handouts.

The PPC, he says, will remove Canada from UN treaties that infringe on sovereignty.

For more information, visit www.peoplespartyofcanada.ca, or email Taras at ppcparty.niagara.falls@gmail.com.



Peter Taras (Photo supplied)

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Daniel, Carol and the family's two Australian labradoodles, Harper and Hannah, pose for a photo with husband and dad Tony Baldinelli. (Photo supplied)

Hirji 'guarantees' unvaccinated will become infected

Penny Coles
The Local

Those who are not vaccinated, says Niagara's acting medical officer of health Dr. Mustafa Hirji, will most certainly contract COVID-19 this fall.

With the increasing number of Delta variant infections, he says, "I guarantee" those who are not vaccinated will become infected. "It's basically a certainty. If you don't get vaccinated, you will get COVID-19."

Provincial cases are on the rise, and Niagara, while the increase hasn't been as rapid, is also seeing more cases, says Hirji, adding it's inevitable that it will get worse.

A couple of weeks ago, there was nobody hospitalized in the region due to the infection, but that too has

changed, he says.

Of those who are sick, the large majority are unvaccinated, and a small number have had only one dose.

The high risk of infection among those unvaccinated points to the importance of workplace policies, at all levels of government and for every employer, he says.

"People who are unvaccinated will get sick, and that leads to destruction of the workplace. There needs to be policies in place to deal with that."

While there are aspects of mandatory vaccinations that are outside of his expertise, such as labour laws and unions, his recommendation to Niagara regional and municipal governments, he says, will be to have policies in place, and if they choose to require vaccinations, how to handle employees who

choose not to be vaccinated.

"If you do nothing, there will be an impact of illness," he says.

There is also a danger of another lockdown, as more people become sick, especially if the health care system becomes overwhelmed with COVID patients and other medical procedures have to be cancelled.

"Obviously the best way to prevent that is to have more people vaccinated," he says.

Last Thursday there were 15 new cases in Niagara, and the number continued to rise, to 18 on Friday and 19 Saturday. After a drop to eight on Sunday, they were up again to 23 Monday, with 148 active cases, including four in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Of those cases, says Hirji, "96.5 look like the Delta

variant."

Beginning this week, Public Health opened drop-in clinics in some Niagara high schools, hoping to attract students born in 2009 and earlier vaccinated with at least a first dose before school starts, says Hirji.

He adds he'd like to see parents and even families vaccinated at the school clinics. "That would be a great win for us."

Most parents want to see their children stay in

schools, and schools remain open, he says, "and the best way to do that is to make sure almost everybody is vaccinated."

He says the age group of 40 to 49, most likely to have children over 12 and eligible to be vaccinated, are 77 per cent vaccinated with their first dose, and 69 per cent with their second.

Yet 12 to 19-year-olds are at 64 per cent for first and only 50 per cent fully vaccinated.

For that reason, he says, it's important for parents to understand vaccinations are safe, and the region is using social media to get that message across.

He blames the rising number of cases on the province for rushing re-opening, which has led to more social interaction.

Rather than another lockdown, he'd like to see those who are unvaccinated have more limited access to the amenities that are open.

CAO, Lord Mayor expect to discuss in-person meetings

Mandated vaccination recommendations are expected to come from Public Health

Penny Coles
The Local

With mandated vaccinations and passports a topic of discussion among governments and employers, CAO Marnie Cluckie said Niagara-on-the-Lake is monitoring what other municipalities are doing, and waiting to hear recommendations from regional Public Health.

She said she expects to be advising on the matter "very soon."

Although the province has reached its vaccination milestone to move forward in its recovery period, it is not ready to move out of Step 3, she said.

It is also updating the eligibility of vaccines, offering third doses to select high-risk people with decreased immune systems, she said.

Vaccinations remain the best defence against COVID, she said, with less than one per cent of COVID cases from those who are fully vaccinated.

Toronto already has mandatory vaccination in place as do several employers, who are requiring employees to be fully vaccinated.

NOTL is working on a "recovering, reopening and reimagining plan" to recover safely, including returning to in-person, and having staff take appointments with residents.

The plan will provide an opportunity to "build back even stronger," Cluckie said,

following on the "tremendous adaptability" to deliver services in different ways during the pandemic.

The plan looks at customer-focused service delivery including digitized, to be even better than pre-COVID, she said.

She expects Monday's meeting will include a discussion of resuming in-person council meetings.

For those who aren't fully vaccinated, she said, there will be clinics at the community centre Sept. 5 and 6, and tentatively there is one set for Sept. 29.

All clinics are now allowing walk-ins, but appointments can still be made at <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/book-vaccine/>

Lord Mayor Betty Disero told councillors Monday she expects mandatory masks will be discussed Thursday at the regional council meeting, and her hope is that once the region has determined where it's going with masks, all municipalities will follow that template.

"I don't think it's to anybody's benefit for municipalities to act alone," she said.

She told The Local she feels the same about mandatory vaccinations.

Before discussions begin at the municipal level, she would like to see regional recommendations from Public Health, so that any decisions made will be based on medical advice, and not for political reasons.

"I think there should be a uniform policy across the region and we need to follow regional recommendations."

Once that occurs, she'd like to see all Niagara municipalities use the same template.

If vaccinations become mandatory for town hall staff, she adds, "at that point what to do if people say no, how do you deal with that?"

Whatever the decision, "I'd prefer the region and municipal councillors work together."

She is looking forward to the discussion expected next week about in-person council meetings, she said.

"It's all about health and safety," she said, and whatever councillors and staff feel comfortable with.

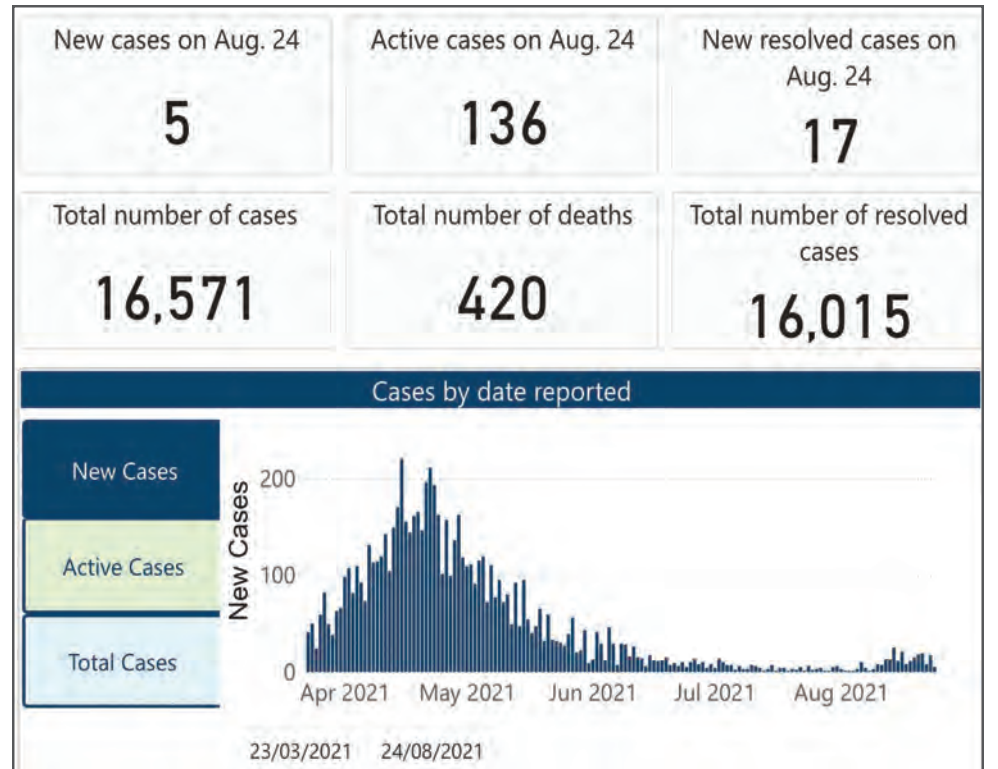
When in-person meetings resume, if some members of the public don't feel comfortable with that, there will be accommodations made so they can still have input "and say what they want to say."

Disero says she is looking forward to being able to walk down the hall to speak with staff in person, or have people attend public meetings in person.

"I can hardly wait for the day we start meeting in person."

The events she attends currently are either outdoors, or masked indoors.

"I'll be happy to meet in person, in some way, shape or form."



Niagara Public Health's website displays graphs that show the numbers of new, active and resolved cases. (Screen shot)



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Town to take a month to study what comes next

Continued from page 1

what Baird had proposed 15 years ago,” he says. “It’s time for a timeout here. What are we doing?”

Once Shoreplan was hired, Simkus took the initiative to contact the original Baird engineer, who confirmed to him that Baird was not consulted by the town once the change was made.

“There was some criticism before 2017 that the shoals there were not doing their job,” Simkus tells The Local. “His comment was that there were two parts to the job. Baird’s was to build the shoals off the water’s edge, while the town’s part was to fill in behind them so the water didn’t come in around and behind them. The town never did that.”

That, of course, resulted in two summers of dire situations for those living in the area. Simkus remembers nine months of putting up with the noise from large generators installed at the beach near his property to pump the water away from the homes.

Peter Ristevski, an engineer and president of Markham-based Macrotek Inc., a major air pollution control designer and supplier, owns a home that backs onto the path leading from Delater Street to the beach.

“During the high water levels the whole back yard, including my neighbour’s property, flooded,” Ristevski says. “I have asked since October 2020 for them to tell me why the elevations (along the path) are higher than the plans they showed us it would look like. They are almost up to a metre higher. And it’s unfinished.”

“The failed groyne and the completion of the park that was promised to be done in the fall of 2020,” he continues, echoing Simkus’ concerns, “are connected fi-



In March, a storm washed away some of the bottom below the large anchor stones, and one was completely washed away. In February, 2020, Dock Area resident Ron Simkus had warned of just such an incident. The town had repairs done in June to make the groyne safe, and will take the next month to decide what to do next. (Photo supplied)

nancially. They come out of the same budget. Council may be asked to decide on which one takes priority.”

Ristevski, Simkus and others want to know when the parkette will be completed and the potential for another drainage problem eliminated. And they do not want to see budget money for that project funnelled into yet another reconstruction of the groyne.

Following Monday’s meeting, during which Jane

Graham of Shoreplan and Peter Ventin of peer reviewer GEI Consultants fielded questions from council, Simkus remained frustrated.

“The discussion kept revolving around the words ‘record high,’” he said in an email. “Some councillors talked about lake levels, but it was river flows that the discussion should have been about.”

Simkus pointed to the Fort Erie flow monitoring data that was frequently

referenced during the presentation.

“The instrument was clearly demonstrating erratic readings prior to the failure and the engineers (Graham and Ventin) admitted that. Parallel readings taken by the USGS (United States Geological Survey) and the US Army Corps of Engineers in Buffalo do not support these extreme values, and nobody talks about them. Why?”

“They are saying they are victims of an act of God that blew all the records away,” he continued. “There was never a single record broken in all of that. And I don’t know why the peer reviewers accepted it, and that Shoreplan wouldn’t even explain why the instrument might have been broken.”

Simkus said that Coun. Sandra O’Connor asked some great questions of the presenters and town irrigation and drainage superintendent Brett Ruck. Coun. Gary Burroughs, at the end of the hour-plus portion of the meeting, wanted to know who was at fault.

“I assume somebody is going to want to put blame on somebody,” Burroughs speculated. “Is it engineers, is it the construction peo-

ple, is it the town? Who is at fault? We can say nobody’s at fault, it was a 100-year storm. But a lot of money is involved in either fixing it or what we’ve already put in.”

“Why isn’t the repair of the groyne covered under an insurance claim,” Simkus speculates. “If there is no grounds for a claim, then the town staff have to accept the culpability for the failure. What did they do? Who’s accountable?”

Coun. Alan Bisback asked what would happen if the shoreline was left as is.

“When we had this failure,” Ruck told council, “we didn’t want to come running right back saying ‘this is the right way to do it’. Even today, we know so much more than we did before, but we now have people still questioning if this is the right thing. We need to work through the process, and when it’s ready, it’s ready.”

“The repair that is there now is temporary,” Graham added. “It is not a design that is meant to last. Things may occur in the meantime. I do support monitoring, I do support seeing what’s going on and making the best decision we can based on what we

are seeing.”

Prior to the meeting, Simkus feared that a vote would be taken to accept the shoreline plan and move forward with the development of a new design to either repair, replace or move the headland feature to prevent future erosion from occurring. And that the money for stormwater drainage closer to the residential area would be dedicated to the new design.

In the end, CAO Mar-nie Cluckie recommended that the matter be approached at council once again in a month’s time.

“At this point,” Cluckie said, “we just wanted to bring as much information as possible, as soon as possible. It was simply meant as an update. Staff will bring information forward hopefully for next month, seeking direction at that point.”

That comes as a relief of sorts for Simkus.

“I told her myself through email that I strongly recommend that you do not put this forward,” says Simkus. “I think there are too many unknowns here. My strongest advice is that we have to get rid of Shoreplan. Stop paying them and don’t let them do any more work.”

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Landlord had no problem getting rid of puppy mill tenants

Continued from page 1

many animals in the two-bedroom, one-and-a-half-bathroom, 1,050 square foot home. He is sure the timing of the discovery prevented any severe damage to the house.

"It could have been a lot worse," he says. "There really wasn't any significant, irreparable damage. Had it gone on for longer there probably would have been, but we've repainted everything. You always have to look at the positive side of things."

That evening in July The NOTL Local was the first to break the news to Scauzillo that the home he owned had been raided. He seemed genuinely surprised at the revelation, and spoke of the many references Grein and Biondi had produced, including one from their most recent landlord in Brampton, affirming them as potential low-risk tenants.

The Etobicoke-area lawyer acted quickly to deal with the situation, visiting the tenants the weekend following the action

by PAWS.

Scauzillo says he had no problem terminating the lease and asking Grein and Biondi to leave the property. He says he told them they had to be out by the end of July. The couple did not fight back against Scauzillo's demand.

Following their departure a number of the cages that housed some of the dogs were left behind in one of the two out-buildings on the lot. Scauzillo said there was also a lingering odour inside the house from the dogs. He

says the new coat of paint and a general cleaning has worked to eradicate all but the last remnants of the smell.

"It's disturbing, it's very alarming," Scauzillo says about the number of dogs removed last month. "I guess we shouldn't really be surprised about anything these days. But it is shocking that this would happen."

When asked if the experience has shown him how challenging it can be as a landlord, he is optimistic.

"I think stuff happens,

but I don't think it's going to happen again," he laughs hopefully. "It's not something that is going to happen on a regular basis. I've had good experience with tenants overall."

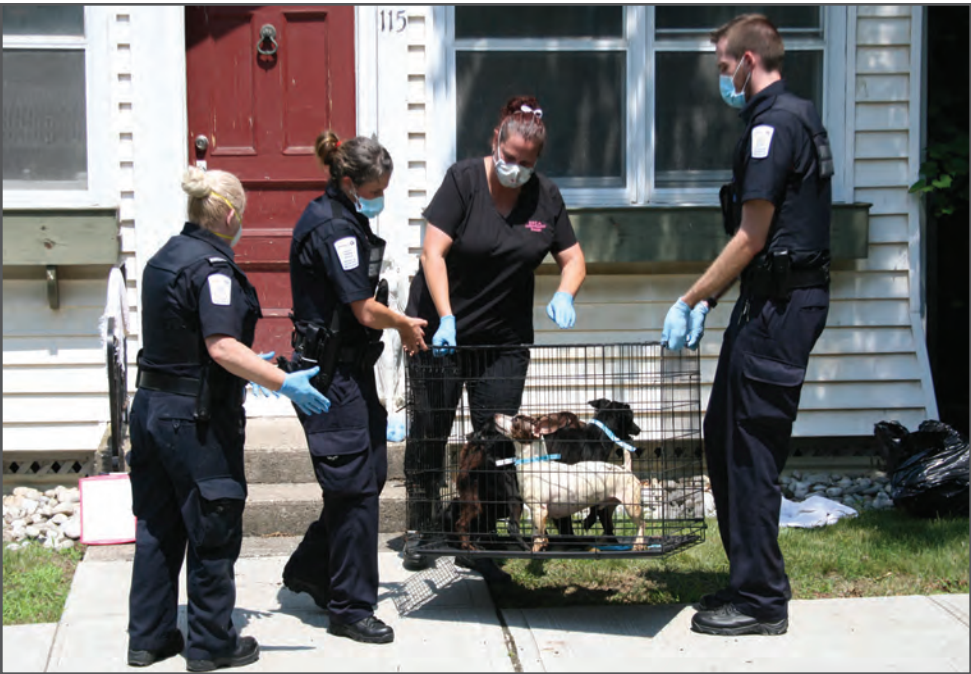
Chris Bowron, whose name was on the listing for NOTL Realty, said that his office has had the Delater Street listing for a number of years. The July incident was the first time anything like that had ever taken place.

"It was a Shaw rental for many years," Bowron says. "It was always a very clean,

very liveable property."

Meanwhile, Brent Ross, a spokesperson from the Ministry of the Solicitor General, says the matter remains under investigation. For that reason he is unable to provide comment about whether there are charges pending against Grein and Biondi.

Many of the Dock Area neighbours have been speculating about what has happened with the rescued canines over the past six weeks. As of press time, officials at the LCHS could not be reached for comment.



On July 14, more than 150 dogs were rescued from the Delater Street house. (Photos by Mike Balsom)



The owner of the Delater Street house has been doing some work to it to make it habitable for the next set of tenants.



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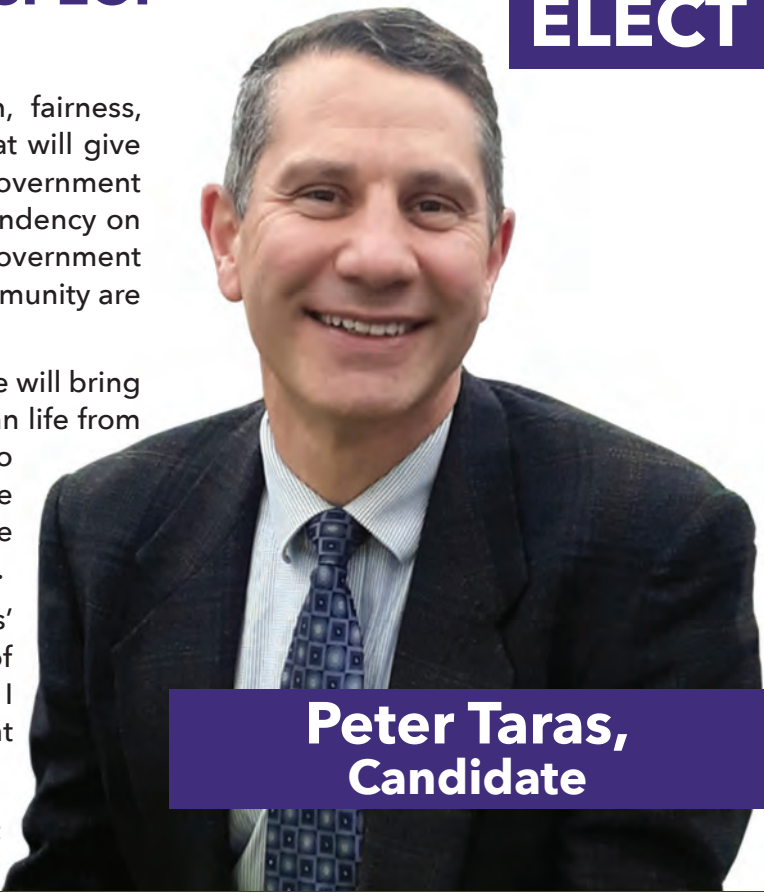
Every individual deserves respect and human dignity. The values of freedom, fairness, responsibility, and respect are the foundations for building a functional society that will give opportunity for success and happiness to every Canadian that wants to work hard. Government should create the conditions for human flourishing rather than to perpetuate dependency on government handouts. Smaller government is a way to increase our quality of life. Government should get out of the way of Canadian citizens as much as possible. Family and community are better at solving local problems than big government.

Returning to traditional values of family, community, and protection of the vulnerable will bring about more joy, peace, and unity in our country. I believe in the protection of human life from conception to natural death. As a father, the best thing I can do for my children is to love their mother. As a family man, the best thing I can do for my country is to raise children that are humble, just, courageous and grateful for the opportunities they have been granted, and to have a sense of service to their family, community and country.

As a political candidate, I will give straightforward responses to my constituents' concerns. I will always try to solve problems by going back to the first principles of charity towards neighbour, faith, hard work, and respect towards every individual. I believe the sole purpose of politics is to make life better for citizens. Government should try to empower the people rather than themselves.

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EDITORIAL

Tune in to virtual meetings to learn about candidates

With the federal election campaign time so short, and the fact that it's being held in the midst of pandemic restrictions, it was not initially clear how all-candidates meetings were going to be handled.

There are still going to be candidates' meetings, with both the NOTL Chamber of Commerce members and Cogeco involved, both of whom have a long-standing tradition and the experience required to make the meetings run smoothly.

Eduardo Lafforgue, president of the NOTL Chamber of Commerce, says the chamber

staff of NOTL, Niagara Falls and Fort Erie, which make up one riding, are working together on this with Cogeco.

The chambers will support the Cogeco debate on Sept. 9, with four candidates live in the studio, representing the Liberals, Conservatives, NDP and Green parties. That follows the national debate rules, which have some stipulations about candidates having a seat at Parliament or having captured a certain percentage of votes to be invited to an all-candidates meeting.

The People's Party of Canada will be invited to send in a short

video from their candidate to air as part of the live broadcast.

The chamber will forward their questions to Cogeco for the meeting, and the following day, the debate will be posted on the website, www.yourtv.tv/niagara.

There is also a second virtual debate with the same four candidates, organized by the three chambers. Lafforgue describes it as more like in a case-study, with questions addressing the main issues facing local businesses, including labour shortages and training, border re-opening, health protection, and planning. The final date for this one has not been confirmed, but

it will give voters a chance to see in detail how the four parties will handle businesses through the recovery period and into the future.

With virtual meetings there is no doubt something may seem to be missing to help voters make their decisions, but there are advantages as well. In addition to being safe, at a time when COVID cases are rising, they will be simple to watch for those who have access to the internet.

And these meetings will be important. This election feels extremely rushed, and candidates won't see as many people in person, but the issues as we

move forward through the next stage of the pandemic will be crucial to our recovery, for business owners who may be hanging on by a thread, certainly, but also for all who don't feel they can endure another lockdown, for all who want guidance on handling mandatory vaccinations or passports, for those who are unemployed or under-employed, and for parents who need affordable daycare, and may also be afraid for their children's health.

In the Niagara Falls riding, we're fortunate that three of the four main candidates are people we know from the 2019 election.

Our Green Party candidate is new, but their platform is familiar to us. The People's Party of Canada candidate is also new, but has a pretty clear-cut platform, and who has been very forthcoming about his opinions — and whether we like them or not, he has a right to express them and to be heard, if only by video, should he choose.

We'll pass on more information as we have it, but the date of Sept. 9 is worth remembering, as an opportunity to help those who are still undecided make up their minds before the Sept. 20 election.

Penny Coles
The Local

Raccoons thrive in human environment



Owen Bjorgan
Special to The Local

How's this for an urban camping experience?

After an evening of paddling on the Welland recreation canal in the full moonlight, my girlfriend and I went back to my friend's place to set up a tent in his backyard. My pal lives in suburban Welland, but has the backyard of a countryside hangout.

He and his partner have several raised gardens, a big tree, a rabbit enclosure, and a fire pit to

enjoy. However, the inner city is home to a lot more than just neighbours.

"What was that?" asked my girlfriend, sitting up suddenly in her sleeping bag.

There it was — the first representative of the raccoon gang that would be paying us visits all night long. This was set to be one of the most restless nights of my life, but it came with irreplaceable entertainment.

The raccoon was inches straight in at us, as if to say, "I mean no harm, but you probably have food, right? Are those chip crumbs still on your shorts? What is this giant garbage bag you're sleeping in?"

We gave it a hiss and a cou-

ple of claps, and it retreated into the darkness.

We laughed, tried to doze off, and then I heard the sound of one of our backpacks being robbed.

This next raccoon looked a little larger, and it was pawing ferociously at one of our bags just a couple of feet from my side of the tent. Raccoons may disturb the peace, but at least they come packaged with comedic value. Something about their cute bandit faces, human-like hands, and bushy tails has most people at subconscious emotional odds with these creatures.

It's highly unlikely this was the first manmade item this raccoon has dug into this evening. You see, humans create an

ideal world for raccoons around our typical areas of residence. Raccoons are primarily nocturnal, meaning most of their locomotion commotion occurs at night. Our human lifestyle leaves behind odours and objects which peak the curiosity of raccoons, such as garbage, food scraps, gardens and pets. Raccoons are scavengers, and will gladly take up any free and easy meal we leave out for them. Even if not left out, per se, their nimble nature will have them curiously exploring boxes, bins, and sheds alike. I imagine that even our tent was simply just something worth checking out.

I hissed at this raccoon as well, and like a burglar you can't be mad at, its silhouette quietly but quickly retreated into the dark bushes. I laughed.

"Cover me!" I joked to my girlfriend, asking if she could shine a light for me. I stepped out of the tent to retrieve our backpacks and the cooler, which I moved to the top of the barbecue. I knew they could get there just as well, but at least it wouldn't be a couple of feet from our heads.

Later, as I'm sleeping with one

eye open looking out the tent, a shady figure appears from underneath the van, and grows as it advances towards the tent. At eye-to-eye level, this raccoon just walked straight toward our tent, its bandied face now in plain view. I was interested in seeing how bold this individual was, so I let it keep walking toward us. This extra bushy, well-fed raccoon got right to the tent door, where it earned another hissing sound from me, and retreated up the fence and into the neighbour's tree.

Raccoons are excellent climbers. Fence lines, tree branches, and rooftops are their urban infrastructure. They have sharp claws, which you can hear scratching their way up any wooden surface as they look to attain safety with height. In a wilder setting, where their populations are controlled by coyotes, foxes, and birds of prey, raccoons use these sharp claws to handle food such as crayfish, snakes, and frogs. Not ketchup chips and pizza crust. I once watched raccoons in Florida sit upright and bite the heads off of slippery fish, crunching away with little room for table manners.

Another raccoon suddenly

starts scaling up a different tree, and it is just a foot away from our tent. The noise startled us, and that probably startled this individual furthermore. He spent the next couple of minutes sniffing and scratching away at the tree bark, shamelessly trying to get at an empty bird feeder (another urban favourite). We then watched with humour as the raccoon descended down the tree head first. You could tell this one was trying to be cryptic and cautious, as it was aware of our presence in the tent.

"I want to see how close he comfortably gets," I said quietly.

It then proceeded to push its nose to the tent, which is when we hissed and clapped yet again. It scurried behind the bunny shed, as another raccoon did so just moments ago.

Like a video game's "final boss" or the climax of a movie, I'm now watching not one, but two shadowy figures emerge out from under the van and start waddling directly toward us. At this exact moment, I could verify that there were at least five raccoons within whispering distance of our tent. We were surrounded!

View from the couch

Donald Combe
Special to The Local

Allan Davies was a bright light in the BBC production of *QI*, and here he is brilliant as defence barrister Henry Farm-

er in *The Brief* (Prime, 2004). His life is beyond complex, both in and out of the courtroom. He is two things: highly intelligent and totally human. Excellent series.

Donald Combe is a retired

English teacher who loves to go to movies. Until he resumes going to theatres, he has graciously agreed to share his opinions, through "short and sweet" exclusives, of Netflix series and movies for The Local.

Letters! We want letters!

If you have a letter to the editor you'd like to see published, please send it to penny@notllocal.com. Please try to keep it to about 350 words. Sorry, but we won't publish anonymous letters. And please stick to the issue at hand, rather than attacking those involved. The deadline is Monday at noon.



Raccoons can be cute and entertaining, but they are not friendly to humans. (Photo supplied)

These two also got another big hiss from me, and their slow, ponderous bodies kicked into high gear as they ran off. Half an hour later, we heard less rustling in the bushes and were paid no further visits. Later, as the sun came up, the raccoons had retreated to the treetops branches or hollow trunks in which they reside.

We've all seen a raccoon at some point. There are certainly more specialized or rare animals I could write about, but I can't say I've ever seen so much raccoon action in one night. It was quite remarkable and impressive, staring into the eyes of an animal which has benefitted enormously from our human world. This Canadian icon is a classic example pulled from a suite of animals that succeed in our human environment, following the mantra of "if you build, they will come."

It was my buddy's backyard. That being said, we can't deny that it was the raccoon's backyard first and foremost.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Local
The Trusted Voice of Our Community

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COMMENT

Local LETTERS

Local LETTERS

Inclusivity citizens' responsibility

A fundamental belief in the equality and worth of all people is a core principle of the Baha'i Faith, as indeed it is in the faiths of all people. It is for this reason that the Baha'is of Niagara-on-the-Lake strongly support the work of the Inclusivity Committee, which recently carried out a survey designed to help the town council make our commu-

nity a more inclusive and welcoming one.

But surely this is really the responsibility of the citizens of this place — the place where we all live and which we all love. We would like to join others in working to increase such a sense of inclusion with and for all, without waiting for the town council to assume this responsibility. We want not just Niaga-

ra-on-the-Lake but all of Canada, indeed all of the world, to leave behind suspicion and fear of the "other" and the "different," and to become a place of humble, helpful friendliness.

We welcome any opportunity to do so.

**Charlotte Letkemann
Hugh J. Church
NOTL**

Why are we seeing a fourth wave?

Millions of people in our world have had two needles placed in their shoulders and a vaccine flowing from the syringe into their bodies. A vaccine that has given millions the protection needed to prevent them from spending time in a hospital room with a ventilator keeping them alive. They are protected from a lie, a simple flu bug a world national leader called this disease that continues to take lives, both the very young to the very old.

Now this fourth wave didn't have to ever happen. In fact, the third wave never had to happen if millions of people hadn't believed the words of a less than honest person who the American people voted to be their leader. These gullible people never for one moment thought about their relatives, their neighbours, strangers on the street, or anyone else for that matter by refusing to take the protection that millions of people have taken in the past approximately eight months. Their poor choices have caused hundreds of thousands of people to die, nurses and doctors to reach such levels of tiredness that they too became sick with this virus that is like none other seen in our lifetimes, and died.

What is it going to take for these people to realize that getting the shots will save lives, even their own? Is it selfishness or a complete lack of understanding as to what they are doing to the world economy, to the lives of families that are losing their breadwinners or their siblings, or are making life so horrific for millions of people?

The world has been turned upside down by this virus, and it appears that until everyone gets vaccinated this pandemic is going to be with us for a

very long time. If someone you know is hesitating, tell them how important they are at this time in history. If they get their shots they will realize that they have been lied to and are not turning into aliens or have not been injected with a chip that will enable their governments to control their lives, both lies.

This whole time we have been living in the pandemic we have seen people fighting the need for vaccinations and the use of masks. Have they not learned from the statistics that both are important if we are to stamp out COVID? Listen up people, you need to follow the medical guidelines or you might just be a statistic on the list of COVID deaths.

Brilliant people are working tirelessly to provide you with the protection you need to stay alive. Years ago, similar dedicated people worked diligently to provide us all with a similar vaccine to stamp out polio, a disease that killed thousands, left people unable to function as they had been used to, and affected the outcomes of people's lives.

Scientists told us that the time span between the first and second COVID shots was between 20 and 28 days to be the most effective. What did our government do and how do they know if the antibodies have been as effective as they would have been had we been vaccinated when the scientists told us was the ideal times between the first and second shots? Now it would appear that we will all require a third shot to maintain the efficacy to keep us protected, however our government seems to once again make the time span longer than scientists are recommending. First I question if our

government knows how our delayed timespan between shot number one and number two has affected the efficacy of our immune backups.

Here we are with a new variant that is testing the theories of all the scientists working to save the lives of millions of people who are relying on them to get this pandemic under control. What is our Prime Minister doing? Instead, he's out campaigning in an early election. Should our officials be putting their efforts into an election, instead of focusing their attention on the worst pandemic of our time and making certain that thousands of people's lives are not at stake? These are two major situations that require this government that we presently have, to put 100 per cent of their attention into. However, this Prime Minister has chosen to call an early election that he hopes will satisfy his needs and not those of thousands of Afghan people whose very lives are at stake, and millions of Canadians whose lives are also in peril.

We are facing two key issues that have our full attention, but our government thinks that an election is the most important issue they must attend to. What do you think? Your votes will tell us what your thoughts are, what you think is most important for our country. If we fail to bring our Afghan interpreters and their families out of the horrific situation they are facing, I don't believe any country will ever assist us in the future. We will have lost the respect of the Afghan people, and many other countries around the world.

**Tom Thornton
NOTL**

Life is a lot like golf



**Ted Mouradian
Special to The Local**

I go golfing with a couple of friends, and we usually alternate between St. Davids and Queenston Golf Courses.

Like life, we don't take the game too seriously, while still doing our best to have a good round with a low score. Golf is known as the game you can never win, simply because you are always trying to beat your last best score, which for many is a difficult task.

The funny thing is that life is, in many ways, similar to golf. Let me explain.

A golfer knows if they pick up a certain iron, pick out a target, complete a routine set-up, commit to the swing and follow through, the ball will go where it is supposed to go and the task will be accomplished. The same is true with life. We know we need a target or goal when we begin a task. We know from experience what we need to do to attain that goal, and we usually know how to execute and follow through to success.

But in golf, obstacles are sometimes put in our way to test us, such as a pond in front of the green, strong winds or different elevations. Instead of going with the routine, adjusting for the obstacle and trusting the shot with a good

follow-through, we try to steer the ball, and that is when it fails.

This is also true in life. We know what is good for us and what is bad. We know who is toxic and who is not. We know better than to have that extra piece of cake or that extra beer, but we do it anyway. The result is that the shot misses the target.

In golf, when a person is addressing the ball and taking the shot, the other golfers are quiet and respectful of what the person is trying to do, even if we may think he has the wrong club or is aimed in the wrong direction. This quiet respect is given, unless that golfer asks for advice.

As for life, when we are trying to reach a goal, others give us advice whether we ask for it or not and in many cases they don't know when to simply be quiet. This can throw off our ability to reach the goal, because now we are questioning things we don't need to question.

Now some golfers have caddies who they trust to give them advice, similar to life, where we have trusted friends to give us good council. In golf we listen to our caddy, but sometimes in life we not only don't listen to our trusted adviser, but more importantly we don't listen to our gut feeling.

Let's put the two together. Every decision we make in life and/or on the golf course is based on past experiences, along with good skills and current knowledge of the elements. It is when we doubt what we know and what we see that we screw up the shot or make a

bad decision. We tend to let our emotions overshadow our true correct gut feelings.

We then try to force the shot, and it usually ends up in the water or the sand trap, the same as when we try to force a work relationship, a love relationship, or a friendship, they all generally end up in conflict. Keep in mind that sometimes even though we mess up the swing, or take that one beer too many, it can still turn out okay. Such is life, and such is golf.

Here are the things to keep in mind when playing golf, or navigating the river of life.

Stop trying to steer the shot or control the stream — neither end in good results. You know what club works best for you for a certain shot, the same as you know what life situation works for you.

In golf, do not try to use the same club the other golfer used if that club is not good for you. Trust the shot. In life do not try to live your life as someone else, or as they say . . . "keeping up with the Joneses." Live the life you were meant to live, the life that works for you.

Remember, aim for a target. Trust your gut. Execute and follow through. Don't take it too seriously (golf or life) . . . it's only a game.

Good golfing and good living.

Ted Mouradian is the President of the 2% Factor Inc. and creator of the Law of Cooperative Action. He is an author and professional speaker and can be reached at ted@the2percentfactor.com

Vi Mills 'a hometown hero'

I was not able to attend the recent ceremony to honour Vi Mills and her many contributions to the community. I had the privilege of working with Vi as a Scout leader in the 1970s. Because of her involvement and support for scouting, countless

numbers of boys in Niagara-on-the-Lake learned about basic survival and camping skills, while creating lifelong bonds through Cubs, Scouts and Venturers.

She certainly influenced my involvement in the scouting program, and I will be

forever grateful for her kind and generous spirit. Vi is truly a hometown hero! Congratulations to her family for this most deserved recognition.

**Jim Alexander
NOTL**



NOTL LOCAL Editorial Banner Bookings

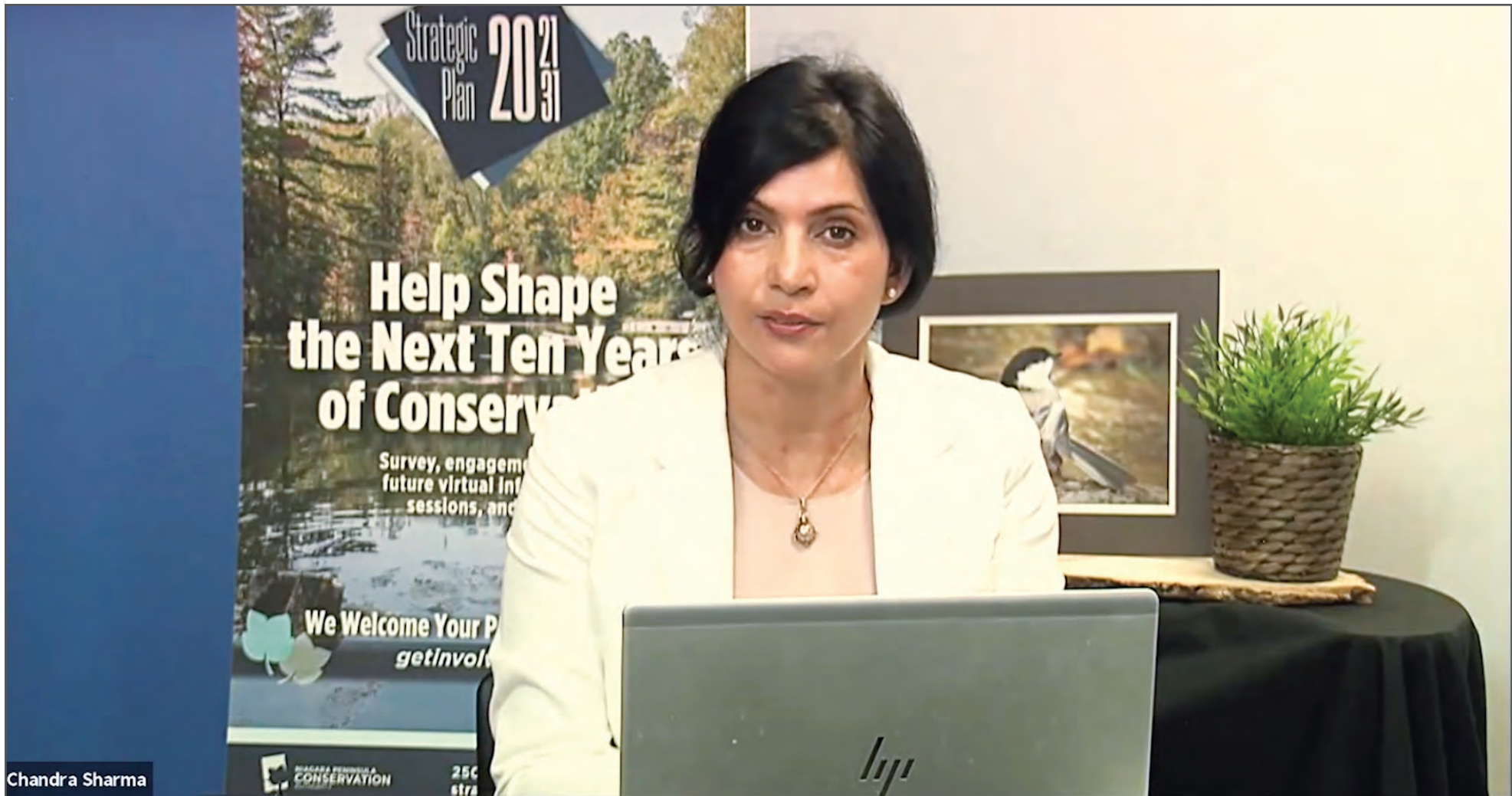
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NPCA CAO Chandra Sharma at the virtual meeting to discuss the strategic plan. (Screen shot)

NPCA working on strategic plan, with community input

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) is about to launch its strategic plan for the next 10 years, and the public has until Sept. 3 to provide feedback, comments or questions.

The organization plays a key role in ensuring the health of Niagara’s watershed, through stream flow and water quality monitoring at multiple stations across the 12 municipalities. In Niagara-on-the-Lake, three properties come under NPCA jurisdiction: the Virgil Dam and Reservoir, Two Mile Creek Conservation Area and Woodend Conservation Area.

About 130 people attended an online information session focusing on the organization’s 2021-2031 strategic

plan hosted by project manager Natalie Green on Aug. 19. The purpose of the meeting was to outline the results of a public survey that was conducted from March 30 to May 6, and to get a first look at the key components of a draft version developed with combined input to date.

The process for the development of the new plan began last fall with the creation of a staff team to take on the challenge. Public engagement took place this spring through the survey, to which the organization received 501 responses, mostly from the Niagara region. The NPCA owns and maintains 41 properties, including some located in Hamilton and Haldimand.

The survey laid out a number of proposed key strategic priorities for the authority, decided on by staff. Of the sample components laid out to participants, only one, marketing NPCA properties as a destination of choice, did not receive strong public support.

“We did take that feedback quite seriously,” Green said, “and we did make some revisions as a result of that feedback. In general, the feedback was really positive and supportive, though there

was some misunderstanding of the NPCA’s roles and responsibilities.”

Recognizing that conservation is critical for people, plants and wildlife alike, the NPCA mission statement for the next 10 years is Nature for All chosen “to create a common ground for conservation-inspired action and accountability to nature.”

As would be expected, throughout the unveiling of the six strategic directions that were presented, the potential effects of climate change on Niagara’s watershed and the need for climate resilience in the future informed many aspects of the plan.

As well, Niagara’s population growth projections over the next 10 years were acknowledged as another potential challenge.

Following the unveiling of the draft strategic plan, a question and answer session was held. CEO Chandra Sharma spoke of the pandemic shining a light on the importance of natural spaces.

“People probably did not realize how important green infrastructure was for the mental health and well-being of our communities,” she said. “We managed it very well. We left our con-

servation areas open. Our staff were at the front line. We wanted the communities to come out and enjoy the green space.”

“I think, along those lines,” Sharma continued, “we will continue to upgrade the assets within these properties. We will make them more accessible from a socioeconomic perspective. We’re looking at everything from that lens: how can we make our programs and properties, our green space more accessible and equitable to everyone in Niagara.”

In December, 2020, the Ford government made changes to the conservation authorities, giving government ministers new powers to make political decisions about construction and industry projects. The move was criticized by many experts as an effort to allow developers to bypass the conservation authorities’ science-based permitting process, stripping them of one of their key roles.

Sharma acknowledged this change, which was implemented just as the development of the 10-year plan began.

“The timing was very good, as we were able to align the changes and adjust,” she

told participants. “The overall mandate and purpose of the conservation authority remains natural resource management. Nothing changes there. Overall, it’s still a broad category of natural resource management and watershed work that we will continue to undertake.”

Working with developers in the planning and permitting process is part of the mandate of all conservation authorities across the province.

“Our approach there is to work with the proponent,” Sharma explained, “to guide them through the technical process, to help them do the right thing so the approvals are timely and the collective outcomes can be achieved.”

She continued, “on the other side, there is the partner-of-choice opportunity. If a development industry partner comes in with a proposal with a socio-economic benefit to restore a big park or invest in the conservation authority foundation, those are opportunities that we look at both from the private and public sector. It’s a balancing act.”

Questions also arose about the NPCA’s relationship with agriculture.

“In this jurisdiction, a majority of our land is in agricul-

tural use,” Sharma said. “The relationship with our agricultural community shows up in two locations in this strategic plan. One is within the healthy and resilient watershed. We need to understand the vulnerabilities from climate change and plan strategies to be looked at.”

“Beyond that,” she continued, “we are also committed to new research and science with our academic partners to find solutions for the agricultural community. There’s also the stewardship piece. Through our restoration program we work with the agricultural community on best management practices. This strategic plan calls for enhancement of our restoration program.”

Sharma also assured participants that the NPCA has no plans to sell any of its 41 properties to developers.


“When a property comes under conservation authority jurisdiction,” she explained, “it comes for a reason. It has sensitive natural habitat or heritage value. Or it’s significant in some other way. The NPCA does not have any plans to sell any of its land to anybody at this point.”

The next step in the process is to finalize the strategic plan and present it for board approval in early fall.

The entire presentation from last week can be seen at and questions, concerns and comments can be sent to the NPCA via getinvolved.npca.ca/2021-2031-strategic-plan.

In addition to his roles as a journalist for *The Local* and Cogeco, Mike Balsom sits on the board of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority Foundation.

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Town asked to consider community garden plots

Penny Coles
The Local

A Niagara-on-the-Lake resident is asking the town to consider repurposing a town-owned lot to be used as a community garden.

Julian Trachsel hasn't got a specific location in mind, although he has some ideas of how it could be run, he told councillors at Monday's planning meeting.

There are generally two types of community gardens, he explained. They can be established by a group that works the entire garden together, or they can be allotment gardens where an individual rents a specific garden plot.

He is envisioning a hybrid model, where a garden group takes it on as a whole, then rents out the plots to individuals, to minimize the work the town would need to do.

He made it clear that what he is proposing would take little involvement from the town, once a location is chosen and prepared for the first garden lots.

Currently there is a community garden behind the Anderson Lane library, benefitting Newark Neighbours, and also one at BY's Honey Farms established this year, with 40 plots, but there are issues there with water supply, difficult access to parking when it's wet, and ticks are a concern, he said.

Niagara-on-the-Lake is seeing "ever smaller lots in new developments," he said, with little room for a garden, suggesting the town shouldn't be restricting residents from having a vegetable garden, just because their lots are small.

He outlined many benefits to a vegetable garden, including encouraging healthier eating, eating local, and eating and sharing what you grow. The gardens can be pesticide-free and mostly organic, he said.

Gardening leads to improved mental and physical wellness — it can be incredibly rewarding to eat a great-tasting tomato you've grown yourself — and the hard work, exercise, fresh air and sunshine is good for gardeners, while the community engagement gives

them a chance to meet other residents.

It's also good education for young and old. "I was lucky. My parents always had a vegetable garden," he said, explaining he had learned as a boy about how to grow vegetables.

Kids today, and even adults, "don't necessarily know where their food is coming from or understand what is involved," he said, adding that a community garden would be great hands-on experience, and a way for kids to learn to appreciate how food gets to their table.

It would enhance the town's reputation, making it look forward-thinking and environmentally friendly, he said, and for some, could help address food insecurity.

All Trachsel is asking for is a suitable plot of land, reasonably flat, in full or near full sun, with parking and in a central location, and with soil that is safe and reasonably fertile, and not a walking or dog-walking area.

He mentioned the former football field next to the high school as just an example, and other areas were mentioned by

councillors and staff, such as the greenspace at Niven Road and Lakeshore, and the park at the corner of Nassau and William Streets.

The location would require a good water supply, and the cost of water has to be established, said Trachsel. He added it would have to be a long-term commitment so that gardeners know before they invest time and money in their plot that they can return every year.

Liability insurance is something the town would have to look into, he added.

Trachsel said he hoped the town would make a decision by January or February at the latest, so the land could be prepared for the first gardens by April.

He was ambivalent about fencing, which is costly, but said he wouldn't want to see people lose their crops to animals, such as coyotes and rabbits. "Maybe that's a decision to make once we know where it is," he suggested.

"This would be a feel-good initiative, when there is a lot around that doesn't feel very

positive right now," he added.

"This is more about the positive benefits in the community, than a bowl of tomatoes."

He said he was hoping to solicit a response from other residents "to see the interest, see what size they want, and what area they need."

Coun. Norm Arsenault, a member of the town's environment committee, said they had

looked at the idea, but weren't sure whether there was a demand for a community garden. He said he supported further investigation of the concept.

Coun. Gary Burroughs made a motion and received unanimous support for asking staff to report back in a few months, looking at location, cost, insurance, "and to see if we can do something to further these community gardens."



A NOTL resident would like to see a community garden in a central location, to allow people to grow their own vegetables. (Photo supplied)



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'Laugh 'til you cry' with Keaton in museum courtyard

**Kim Wade
Special to The Local**

Sometimes simple things are best, like enjoying your favourite snacks, a cozy blanket, dusk on a late summer evening

and a good belly laugh with friends and family.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum staff is inviting you to enjoy all these simple pleasures on their outdoor grounds at on Thursday, Aug. 26 at 9 p.m.

with the last film of the 5 & Dime Film Series.

This week's film is *Cameraman*, directed and produced by and starring American silent filmstar, Buster Keaton. It was co-directed by Edward Sedg-

wick, and co-starred Marceline Day and Harold Goodwin. This 1928 silent film has a simple premise. Boy sees girl. Boy falls in love with girl and he will do anything to impress her, but, of course, things do not always work out quite like he planned. Buster (Keaton) sells his photography business to buy a film camera to try to catch the attention of a MGM studio office worker, Sally (Day) but Buster finds he is not the only one trying to impress Sally. Harold (Goodwin) is also vying for Sally's attention. As a completely inexperienced cameraman, Buster bumbles his way in his new vocation with numerous mishaps and hilarious adventures.

According to Marion Meade in her biography, *Buster Keaton: Cut to the Chase*, this critically acclaimed movie has been used

to train new MGM writers as a "perfectly constructed comedy." In 2005, 77 years after the film's release, it was selected for preservation by the United States National Film Registry by the Library of Congress as being "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant." The film was almost lost forever in an MGM vault fire in 1965. Luckily, a complete print was found in Paris in 1968.

Another copy of higher quality and with some additional footage was discovered in 1991, according to Dennis Harvey in his essay on *The Cameraman* at the 2012 San Francisco Silent Film Festival. These two prints have now been combined to produce the version that is now available, and was released last year on DVD and Blu-ray.

With taglines like: "Buster Keaton will make you laugh 'til you cry in *The Cameraman* with Marceline Day," published in the Oxnard Daily Courier on Nov. 5, 1928 and "Buster Keaton: You sure give the world a new lease on life and laughter in *The Cameraman*," published on Feb. 1, 1929 in the Dunkirk, NY, Grape Belt and Chautauqua Farmer newspaper. This is sure to be a great film full of historical significance and more than a few chuckles.

Admission to the event is by donation, and is weather permitting. Bring your chair, snacks, and your favourite blanket and enjoy a good belly laugh with family and friends with this film classic.

For more information contact the NOTL Museum at 905-468-3912 or at notlmuseum.ca



The Cameraman, starring Buster Keaton, will be shown in the NOTL Museum courtyard. (Photo supplied by the NOTL Museum)

John McFarland honoured in St. Andrew's Cemetery

**David Hemmings
Special to The Local**

Last Friday morning at St. Andrew's Church Cemetery, a group of RCMP Veterans' Association Golden Horseshoe Division members and former RCMP officers, led by Dave Miller, installed a memorial grave marker to honour the service of John Malcolm McFarland (1858-1915) to the North West Mounted Police.

The NWMP was formed on May 23, 1873 as a para-military law enforcement force to protect Canada's sovereignty. It was then enhanced with the recruitment of local Canadians across the territory in 1878 when Constable

McFarland, #145, was enlisted. King Edward VII awarded Royal to North West Mounted Police (RNWMP) in 1904. The government amalgamated the RNWMP and Dominion Police to form the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) in 1920.

John M. McFarland was the great-grandson of John McFarland (1752-1815), the Scottish master shipwright who built McFarland House on the Niagara River Parkway in Niagara in 1800. and was Governor John Simcoe's dockmaster. Several McFarlands held important positions in Niagara. Although there were large family groups in the McFarland family, the inheritance

of the acquired wealth between the generations was ruled by the family tradition of intestate deaths and primogeniture (the eldest son inherited the entire estate of his parents), and many of the children remained unmarried. Finally, the wealthier family members moved west to Alberta and British Columbia, leaving no living family members in the Niagara region.

The name has been largely forgotten, but there are 20 family members buried in St. Andrew's Church Cemetery, mostly without grave markers.

David F. Hemmings is an author of local history books, and the president of the Niagara Historical Society and Museum.



Bob Kempf, John Keddy, Sef Ginther, Dave Miller, Fred Foster and Paul Richard, all former RCMP officers from Burlington, Ont., are honouring former officers. (Photos supplied)





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SUMMER SIZZLE

Persistence pays

Angelika's story of how she came to open her Real Estate Office in the Old Town Niagara-on-the-Lake

**Submitted by
Angelika Zammit**

Angelika Zammit is accustomed to hard work. Here is a little bit of her history.

As a young single mother, it became a way of life for her out of necessity and drive.

In her 20s, she worked at three different jobs, and attended Ryerson university through

night school classes, achieving her goal of supporting her son and buying her first home.

Her career in those days was in the high-end printing business, says Angelika. At 29 years of age, she opened her own printing company in Toronto mainly working for banks, fund companies, CTV, large government agencies and international ad agencies.

With a savings of \$40,000, a rental industrial unit, a telephone, hard work, and her reputation in the industry this enabled her to attain a six-figure credit to grow her company.

As the underdog, so to speak, there is actually an advantage. Being relentlessly resourceful, acting quickly when required and to consistently self-educate and improve herself and her skills has also helped her reach her goals.

Within the next few years she became multi award-winning in the industry, and was included in the top 100 businesswomen in Canada for Profit Magazine and MacLean's Magazine several times.

Having a giving nature she has helped others throughout the years as well to achieve their dreams as well.

In 2010, as the internet drastically reduced the need for printing and mailings, she closed her printing business, and real estate became her next career and her passion. At this time she had already bought, sold, and renovated over 20 homes as well.

Moving to the Old Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake in 2010 "was a dream I had for many years. My first home was on John Street. I started in the real estate business shortly after moving here. Going for my "after dinner-walks" towards Mississauga Street. I would stand in front of Fernando's Hair Styling (on the corner of Mississauga and John), thinking this would be the perfect location for a real estate office." Not knowing this was a Real Estate company 40 years ago.

Over 10 years, she contacted the owner of the building three times a year, sending cards and letters, asking that she be notified if the space became available.

She was recently thrilled to be given the opportunity to open her office at that location. PERSISTENCE PAYS!

"Even COVID wasn't going to stop me," says Angelika. "I am excited to be here, and to be of service to my community."

Through Right At Home Realty, Angelika says, she will provide excellent service for buying and selling, and so



much more. We have a huge network of over 5,000 agents in the GTA and reaching millions internationally. It's an amazing company to work with and I'm thrilled.

"I offer a very long list of additional services, from help with packing and moving, helping clients with free design ideas, and renovations - I do it all. My list of how we can help people is endless. Feel free to drop by for a cool beverage anytime, no obligation necessary. We enjoy chatting and getting

to know our neighbours, and helping however we can."

Reach out to Angelika and she can email her package of the many different services she can offer, she says.

"As a self-made, successful business owner, I am driven for success, both professionally and personally."

Let her use that passion, drive and enthusiasm to help you buy or sell a house, and take advantage of the many other services she can provide to assist you with your move.



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What Is The Deal With Real Estate Prices?

Submitted by
ReMax Greg Sykes

In mid March, 2020 I remember huddling around the TV at the ReMax office (before social distancing was implemented!) waiting to hear Prime Minister Trudeau address our great country. There were so many questions: Was travel allowed? Would schools close? Would the markets crash? In my own little world I wondered what would happen to the beautiful listing I JUST posted on MLS THAT morning at 53 Queenston in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Would anyone come to see it? Would I be allowed to show people through? Could I sell a property in a pandemic? There was a brief moment where I was sincerely worried. I had some clients call and ask me to help them sell everything and liquidate their real estate portfolio, but for a few days, I wasn't even sure we would be able to complete a real estate transaction! But what

about folks who have sold their home and NEED to purchase a home?

Thankfully, technology, lawyers, banks, land registry etc have been able to pivot and continue to serve - albeit in 'different than we're used to' ways.

My father used to tell me that often, devastation leads to innovation and I would concur that there have been many changes to how we "do life" in general! Multiple real estate agents, businesses owners and advertisers did a mass exitus/reduction in advertising on billboards and signs throughout the region in an effort to save money. However, I decided it may be a good (albeit risky) time to double down in advertising: so I took out nearly 40 new billboards/signs around Niagara as they became vacant in an effort to take the opportunity to get the word out that I was still in business and set up to serve.

My phone began ringing more than it's ever rang! From March 15 to about



March 22 I navigated just ONE real estate deal and otherwise it was the quietest week of my career. But I had no idea what was coming. By the end

of March, the Real Estate Council Ontario implemented some excellent Covid regulations to allow us to continue trading in real estate, to conduct

business. My team and I invested in the best video marketing tools available and we begin to offer full virtual tours to our clients etc and by May 1st, we had sold more properties than we typically would sell in an entire year. Somehow, 2020 ended up being the busiest year in my 14 years as a real estate agent.

Sometimes the biggest setbacks can be our biggest set ups. Now, I do not want to be insensitive to the very real fact that Covid has devastatingly impacted millions and millions of people in a negative way and I would be remiss if I did not commend every essential worker for their heroism this past 18 months. We salute you!

In conclusion, although prices in some markets in Ontario have nearly doubled in the last two years, no one can claim to know precisely WHY. In my professional opinion, SOME of the contributing factors in Niagara are: people fleeing the big cities to work from home, young people

delaying their weddings and buying a home instead of paying for the wedding, enticingly low interest rates, rising costs of construction and the mass unloading of rental properties (investors cashing in while the market is hot) - to name a few. Personally I believe that at some point the market needs to - and likely will - regulate itself, but in the meantime, prices continue to rise.

We don't have a crystal ball but we do know that people will ALWAYS need to a place to live, and living in Niagara-on-the-Lake is the best place to live in our beautiful country!

As a resident of NOTL, I know and love this area and if you are thinking of buying or selling but don't know where to start, please call me today. I would be delighted to have a cup of coffee with you, let you know what your home is worth and let you know what properties are available for you to consider! Thanks for reading.

~ Greg Sykes

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New business caters to social media-savvy

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

Niagara-on-the-Lake's newest business is truly Insta-worthy.

With Lord Mayor Betty Disero cutting the ribbon, Micaela Grant and Katrina Boccia held the grand opening of Selfie Mode on Saturday. The young owners of the Mary Street business hope their photography and videography studio becomes the go-to location for social media savvy travellers and locals alike.

Boccia, 28, and 23-year-old Grant, first discussed the business idea while working together as super-

visors at Bricks & Barley.

"Over COVID, I was on Tik Tok and I came across this idea," Grant says. "Selfie studios had come up in the States. I thought it was the coolest idea, so I started to do some research and I saw that there was none in Canada, except for Calgary."

While sweeping the Bricks & Barley patio one day, Grant mentioned the idea to Boccia, who immediately offered to partner with her on the venture.

Grant, who studied communications and marketing at Brock University, and Boccia, a graduate of Niagara College's human resources program, began

preparing a business plan with the intention of applying for financing through non-profit Futurpreneur Canada.

"In the end, we decided to bootstrap it," Grant says. "We decided to go it alone, without going into debt."

The pair settled on the Mary Street location. "It was an office space," Boccia tells The Local. "The walls had giant windows in the middle of them. For photography, that was not cool. We wanted to use every single aspect of the space that we could to bring our vision to life."

So they drafted friends and family members to get their studio Insta-ready.

Windows came out and were replaced with new drywall and studio quality lighting was installed, providing them with multiple blank canvases ready to be transformed into hip selfie backdrops.

Taking inspiration from what they had seen online, Boccia and Grant came up with a multitude of creative ideas for what their target market would like to see. Being of the same age as that target market certainly helped to a great degree.

Local artists were contacted and enlisted to bring their ideas to life. Upon entering Selfie Mode, visitors are immediately struck with the work of Niagara

Falls muralist and tattoo artist Dan Kozina, whose "Greetings from NOTL" mural sets the location for the first stop on the selfie tour.

Indeed, every single aspect of the Mary Street space has been used for their vision. Boccia and Grant point out that there are 13 stops on the Selfie Mode tour, 14 if you also include the bathroom, painted in a modern art style.

The two new business owners lead the reporter down the hallway, past the floor-to-ceiling wall of records, a graffiti wall and a rough brick wall with a pair of wings strategically placed for maximum selfie effect. Even a former coffee nook in the hallway has been designed to star in photos.

The former offices now house multiple movie studio-like sets. One includes a clawfoot tub filled with plastic balls, while another has been modelled after a teenage girl's bedroom from the 90s, complete with posters of Britney Spears and the Backstreet Boys and old teen magazines sourced from Ottawa. The latter would have fit perfectly into the movie *Clueless*.

Despite all the work that obviously went into decorating each of the stops along the way, Boccia and Grant say that much of what is seen today at Selfie Mode might not be there in a couple of months.

"We are changing them seasonally," Grant says of the backdrops. "Halloween is coming in the fall, so a lot of our themes will reflect that. And we'll do some things for Christmas

as well."

During the walk-through it is clear that the two St. Catharines-born young women have the enthusiasm and the energy to make the business a success.

Their excitement for describing each setting is palpable. One can see how their love for what they have created will set the atmosphere for a fun-filled indoor selfie tour.

And they are always thinking of ways to expand their reach.

"We think this would be a perfect addition to wine tours down the road," Grant says. "It's great for birthday parties, too. And a lot of our sets are portable so we can take it on the road."

"And with our design and marketing background," she continues, "we also offer customizable backgrounds. We'd also like to offer our services to different wineries, to create sets reflective of their own personal brands as well."

Boccia and Grant plan to continue juggling their jobs at Bricks & Barley while operating Selfie Mode seven days a week, from 11 a.m. until 9 p.m. The studio is located at 376 Mary Street.

They offer half-hour and one-hour sessions which can be booked online via their Facebook page. Visitors are encouraged to bring their own phones and cameras, though they do offer rental cameras or a professional photographer for those who request that service.

You can find them on Instagram at @selfiemodeniagara.



Micaela Grant, Lord Mayor Betty Disero and Katrina Boccia cut the ribbon on the new Mary Street business. (Hayley Gagnon)



Katrina Boccia and Micaela Grant demonstrate two of their selfie stations. (Photos by Mike Balsom)

New neighbourhood celebrates multiculturalism

Penny Coles
The Local

With their subdivision of The Vines growing, and outdoor COVID protocols becoming less restrictive, a group of neighbours on the Paradise Grove cul-de-sac decided it was time to get to know each other.

Loraine and David Craig, the first to have their house construction completed, moved onto the street two years ago. They've been in Niagara-on-the-Lake for about 15 years, but as more houses were finished and new neighbours arrived, they learned it was an eclectic group of people from across the country, with different ethnic backgrounds, most of them new to the area.

There are the Craigs and five others at the head of the cul-de-sac, those who have been on the street the longest, and when the Craigs and other neighbours who arrived on the street shortly after them decided to hold an event to get to know the newcomers, "suddenly I became in charge," Loraine laughs.

They first planned to do a Diner en Blanc, similar to what has been done in the town in the past, but decided to relax the rules a little.

Traditionally it would mean everyone would be dressed in white, with white table linens and accessories, but they chose to be a little more casual. However, like other such events, each household would provide and set up a table.

To make sure everyone was comfortable with the level of socializing, especially with the pandemic, says Loraine, she offered two alternatives: neighbours could eat their own food at their own table if they wished, then mingle to meet the others on their street, or they could join a share and greet table, with those who chose to providing and introducing their favourite cultural dish or drinks for neighbours while they strolled and enjoyed meeting and mingling.

"Most are double-vaccinated and we were outdoors, so it seemed a safe way to get together. We just wanted a plan that would make everyone feel safe and comfortable."

With so many people from different cultures and different parts of the world on such a small street, Loraine decided to go with a multicultural-themed celebration, and suggested if her neighbours were so inclined, they could include their national flag, which several did.

Some chose to include a Canadian flag as well, as did the Craigs — natives of Scotland, they had the red maple leaf and a Scottish flag.

Loraine lists the nationalities she can remember, which included Canadian, Guyanese, Italian, Indian, English, Jamaican, Scottish, German, Portuguese, Ukrainian, and Ghanaian. There may have been others, she says, and likely will

be more in the future.

Some of the drinks and food that were provided were Italian tiramisu and the alcoholic drink Prosecco; Indian Samosas and a dessert of gulab jamun, Jamaican jerk pork; Scottish Sangria — people got a kick out of the concept of adding whisky to

wine and fruit, says Loraine — with potato scones. Also shared were Guyanese chicken and rice hot pot, Canadian Caesar cocktails, Ghanaian chicken soup, English sausage rolls, and Ukrainian perogies and sauerkraut.

It was so much fun, Loraine

says, after months of not being able to get together, she expects it to become an annual event. This year, they had 35 people attend, representing 15 houses. There were 20 houses completed by the time of the dinner, but not all residents had moved in. By next summer, there should

be a total of 68 homes, she says.

She jokes that because she took charge, some of her neighbours were calling her El Presidente, "but next year, I'll pass along the wooden spoon and the title, and others can take turns organizing it."

Although she didn't know

all her neighbours very well, she has discovered "they're a sociable group, and we had a lot of fun. It was organized to be held from 6 to 8 p.m.," she says, "and there were still some out on the street at 1:30 a.m. Quite a lot of people stayed out until then."



Liz, Paul and Lino show off some of the food at the Paradise Grove version of a Diner en Blanc gathering. Neighbours had first-name only name tags, and Loraine Craig, organizer and photographer, didn't know all their last names.



Loraine and David Craig display their Scottish heritage and Canadian flag, at their Diner en Blanc table.



Debbie and Doris enjoy the opportunity to get to know their neighbours better.



Mario, Taheer, Paul, Nick, David and in front, Shivani at the Paradise Grove street dinner.



Glen, Dianne, Judith and Blair offer a large selection of treats at their neighbourhood gathering.



Dianne and Gary get into the spirit at their neighbourhood Diner en Blanc.



The Saturday neighbourly get-together drew 35 people from the new neighbourhood.



Artistic director Atis Bankas plays the violin, accompanied by Erica Goodman playing the harp and Leslie Allt on flute. (Mike Balsom)

Monet-inspired garden venue for *Paris Connection* premiere

**Mike Balsom
Special to The Local**

It's a match made in paradise.

The Monet-inspired grand garden at Pillar and Post provides the backdrop for Music Niagara

Festival's *Paris Connection*, to premiere as the next installment of the At Home Series on the non-profit organization's website and YouTube channel Thursday, Sept. 2.

Music Niagara's founder and artistic director Atis

Bankas wishes Vintage Hotels owner Jimmy Lai could be here to experience it.

Lai, of course, is in China, having been sentenced to 14 months in prison after being found guilty in mid-April of unauthorized assembly. The conviction

stems from the role his Apple Daily newspaper played in pro-democracy efforts, as well as from his participation in organizing and participating in protests last year.

"It was the vision of Mr. Jimmy Lai," Bankas says, explaining that Monet's Giverny garden, immortalized in much of his art, was less than an hour from Paris, the home of the French Impressionists, whose work was inspired by the artist.

at the festival, and drummer Lorne Grossman's association with Music Niagara goes back to the 1812 celebrations, when the Oakville Symphony tympanist's work was front and centre for a percussion heavy score.

On flute is Leslie Allt, the principal flautist with the National Ballet Orchestra. Allt is known as an avid proponent of contemporary music, and has also performed or recorded with the likes of Ray Charles, Sophie Milman, David Amram, Blue Rodeo and Diana Krall.

ed inside the new Event Barn of the Pillar and Post garden, and it surprised many just how good the acoustics were in the space. It helped, of course, that event sponsor Steinway provided one of their pianos free of charge, requiring the festival to pay only for shipping it from Toronto.

"It's very alive," he enthuses about the barn. "There is beautiful resonance coming off the wood. It gives me ideas about what can be programmed here in the future. I bet we are probably the first professional musicians doing a concert here. It's a beautiful venue for years to come and it can accommodate a variety of genres."

For the video premiere next week, exterior images of the garden grounds, including the stunning Pont du Monet, will be interspersed with the music the artist's original surroundings inspired.

Bankas is sure that there will be many future Music Niagara Festival concerts held in the beautiful setting, and he hopes that soon, Jimmy Lai will have his freedom returned so he can be back in Niagara-on-the-Lake to experience the result of his vision.

"We have a wonderful relationship with Vintage Hotels," says Bankas. "I hope he somehow gets the video wherever he is. His ideas and his dreams came through."

Paris Connection debuts on the Music Niagara Festival website and its YouTube channel on Thursday, Sept. 2 at 4 p.m.

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Bricks & Barley is a local business spotlight featuring a variety of businesses in the Niagara-on-the-Lake area. The spotlight includes a photo of the business, a brief description, and contact information.

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Visually impaired woman achieves challenging goal

Penny Coles
The Local

Erica Blythe (Van de Laar) has been visually impaired since she was five years old, but she has never let it hold her back.

She has set goals for herself since childhood, including deciding to be a lawyer when she was just eight years old, and as she graduated from high school and began university, she says, she knew it would be a challenge — law school is difficult enough for those without a disability.

But she was determined. She did her research, and came to the conclusion that while it might be difficult, it was possible — and she has proved herself right.

To get to university — and she did so with top marks — she had to develop good study habits. She also learned to work with accommodations that could help her. And now, at the age of 27, with support from those closest to her, she has begun her dream career, having accomplished that goal she set for herself almost two decades ago.

“I was forced to develop time management and organization skills at a young age,” says Blythe, “and I further developed those skills throughout my academic career in undergrad and law school. With the added challenges that my disability presented, it was necessary for me to be extremely disciplined in order to succeed and achieve my goals.”

With professors often pointing to notes on a board, which she couldn't see, she spent extra time outside of the classroom with tutors.

She also relied on software that turns text into audio, at first a very slow process, but which became faster for her as she became comfortable with it. And she used Zoom text to magnify print by five times on her 24-inch computer screen.

She was able to use those aids during exams, and was given more time to complete them, she says.

After finishing high school, Blythe earned a full academic scholarship at Western University, graduating from the business program on the Dean's Academic Roll of Excellence with an A average.

She accomplished that while also volunteering as a residence assistant.

During her summers at home in Niagara-on-the-Lake, where her family own Van de Laar Orchards on the Niagara

River Parkway, she worked at Inniskillin Winery, conducting tours and pouring tastings at the bar. She made people aware of her disability at the start, but could conduct a tasting from behind the bar sometimes without people realizing she can't see.

That's a quality that doesn't always work in her favour. She has run into situations where, because of what she accomplishes, people realize she's visually impaired, but not how difficult it is for her, she says. It's also unfortunate that because of how blind people are portrayed on TV, people think she's not as impaired as she is. “They see me performing as well as I do, and they think I'm just being dramatic,”

Her vision allows her to see shapes about two feet in front of her — anything more than that is blurry, she says.

When she was little, her younger brother Andrew was diagnosed with a large lesion on his brain, and passed away at the age of three. Doctors determined he was suffering from Leigh's Syndrome, and realized that was the source of Erica's visual difficulties. Her sight impairment remains under control, and she continues to see a neuromuscular surgeon regularly.

She has faced a lot of negativity as she pursued her goals, beginning when she was a child and often heard “she can't do this or that, she shouldn't, she won't,” from people who believed she was trying to accomplish something out of her reach. She was even told at one point that if she made it through law school, she would graduate in the bottom 10 per cent of her class. But she says about her disability, “it's not one size fits all.” And she wouldn't let those comments hold her back — they motivated her to work harder, to show she could do anything she wanted to do if she put her mind to it. And those who mattered most, her family and closest friends, were always there to support her, she says.

Her first year at law school was at the University of Windsor, where she finished in the top 10 per cent of her class. She then transferred to the University of Western Ontario, where she graduated in the top quartile.

Along the road, she says, “there were definitely challenges.”

Her rigorous study schedule took up all her time when she wasn't in class, with “every minute of every day planned out,”



Erica Blythe (Van de Laar) has the certificates to prove her many accomplishments, despite her visual impairment. (Photos supplied)

and there was “no time for socializing. But that's how it has to be when you want to achieve something.”

She was called to the bar in June, 2020, at the peak of COVID, when nobody was hiring, and lawyers were being laid off.

After a short time with another law firm outside Niagara, she was recently hired by Martin, Shepherd, Fraser in Niagara Falls, and is specializing in corporate and commercial law, wills, estates and real estate, and now living back in Niagara, her husband working for the family farm.

She says she was forthright from the beginning about her disability, and what she would need to do her work, basically the same aids she has used throughout school.

Both firms she has worked with were very good with the accommodations she required, she says.

She tells clients who come to her office that she is visually impaired, but everyone she's met since she started working for the

Niagara Falls law firm, including clients, other lawyers, clerks and staff, “have all been awesome. I haven't faced the same challenges that I have in the past.”

Although she's at the beginning stages of her career, and loving her new job, she is still setting long-term goals for herself. She hopes to one day become a partner, and after that, achieve another goal she's had since she was a kid and watching Judge Judy.

“I'd love to be a judge, and advocate for the law.”

Erica learned when she was young, living with a disease that could be fatal, to make each day count.

And along the way, her drive and determination have only strengthened. To others facing life challenges, she says, “don't be afraid to try.”

She quotes Wayne Gretzky, who said, “you miss 100 per cent of the shots you never take.”

“If you genuinely try, and fail, that is fine,” says Erica, “but if you fail to try, you will never succeed. Don't let anyone else write your story.”



Lawyer Erica Blythe (Van de Laar) at her desk at Martin, Shepherd, Fraser in Niagara Falls.

Friends of St. Davids celebrate end of lockdowns

Greg Walker
Special to The Local

In the spring of 2021, when the COVID-19 vaccination program was finally gathering momentum, the leadership of the Friends of St. Davids (FOSD) decided that it was time to plan a reopening celebration, after over a year of lockdown.

During the pandemic, we had learned to stay away from each other. Even Christmas was a virtual celebration. Now, with family and friends being vaccinated, it was time to start the healing process.

Just a few months later, with the Delta variant lurking dangerously around us, FOSD's 2021 celebration will be in two parts: a golf tournament at Eagle Valley Golf Course, followed by a picnic, both carefully planned to keep our friends safe.

This Thursday, the St. Davids Lions Club is making its pavilion available to the FOSD so members can get reacquainted safely at the picnic, with a barbecue generously provided by Kent Heritage Farms and music by professional musician Dave Rusch.

FOSD has lots to celebrate. It was founded in 2018 by Dorothy and Greg Walker, who recognized that rapidly growing St. Davids needed a social group to help residents,

new and lifelong, to get to know each other. By January 2020, the organization had held four events — two at Christmas and two in the summer — and started five special interest groups: wine-tasting, euchre, a luncheon group, a pub night, and mahjong. Then the pandemic hit us, and it all had to pause. However, when public health regulations allowed, FOSD started two outdoor activities: yoga lessons and a walking group.

In May, Susan Pearson offered to start a garden group that, with help and encouragement from the NOTL parks and recreation department, would adopt the pollinator garden and lavender garden, both located at the four corners intersection. The group now has nine active gardeners, all caring for these beautiful areas at the centre of the village.

Then Lili Revas-Kvederys came up with another community-building project. Her vision is to have Little Free Libraries located throughout St. Davids, all designed to reflect the rich history of the village. Lili recruited master model builder Leslie Mann, who has built the first library, which will be unveiled at the picnic. Dorothy Walker provided the story of the heritage property that this first unit represents,

and the library will soon be installed at the Tanbark Park pavilion.

Historically, St. Davids

was a proud and thriving independent village until, starting in the 1960s, it was bypassed and overlooked.

Now, as a proud community of Niagara-on-the-Lake, it is rebounding with new growth, new businesses,

and new energy. On Aug. 26, the Friends of St. Davids will celebrate this wonderful comeback!



This summer, with safe gathering outdoors permitted, members of a FOSD group worked on a pollinator garden near the four corners intersection. (Photos supplied)



One of the activities started by the Friends of St. Davids was regular mahjong games.



Members of the Friends of St. Davids enjoyed meals out at local restaurants in 2019 before COVID hit, including the NOTL Golf Club and the Sandtrap Pub & Grill, and plan to do more socializing as it's safe.

LocalHAPPENINGS

FISH FRY

Thursday, August 26th
4 - 7 p.m.

TAKEOUT & DINE IN
CASH ONLY

1 piece \$10
2 piece \$13
with fries
and coleslaw

Legion

BRANCH 124
NIAGARA ON THE LAKE

Royal Canadian Legion Br. 124 | 410 King St.,
905-468-2353 | legion124@gmail.com

ST. DAVIDS LIONS
DRIVE-THRU BBQ

Friday, August 27th • 4 to 7 pm
1462 YORK RD. ST. DAVIDS

PLEASE WEAR A MASK WHEN ORDERING/PICKING UP

COMBO MEALS:
All meals
come with
bottled water.
Add a soft drink
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Lions Burger & Fries \$10
Lions CDN Burger & Fries \$12
(topped with peameal bacon)
Lions Peameal Bacon & Fries \$10
Leo's Hot Dog & Fries \$6

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LocalWORSHIP

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requires **Seasonal Farm Workers** for work in vineyards and orchards in rural Niagara-on-the-Lake. **Full Time March to October 2022**, (approx. 50hr/week). Work is outdoors in varied weather conditions, and physical in nature. Jobs include pruning, tying, weeding, thinning, tucking, suckering and harvesting. Prevailing minimum wage rate applies: \$14.39/hr. No experience or education required. **Fax** resume to: **905-935-6704** or **email** to: **office@glenlakevineyards.com**

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Car is currently in our garage in Niagara-on-the-Lake and may be viewed by appointment.

CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU

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- Across:**
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4 1 G
8 Strikebreaker
12 Siestas
14 Egg layers
15 Father of a leveret
16 Superstar
17 Wanes
19 Old Peruvian native
20 Aligned
21 Open
22 Enormous
23 Abominable snowman
24 Scrutinize
25 Study
27 Mardi ---
29 Evil
30 E.g. A O L
33 Four pecks
36 Secret Chinese society
37 Bingo!
38 Time in Boston
39 Merchant ship's capacity
41 Immediately
42 Dentists' grp.
43 "Death --- Expert Witness" (P D James)
44 Is adjacent to
46 Homo sapiens

47 Frequently, poetically

48 Mailed

49 Specialty food store

51 Contemptuous exclamation

52 Mantle

56 State of constant change

58 Lily Munster actress Yvonne De ---

60 Not his

61 Captain Jack Sparrow actor

62 Online missives

63 Senses of self-importance

64 Wild about

65 Look after

66 Seedy joint

67 Talks lovingly

68 Singles

69 Could be bobby, red or white

Down:
1 One
2 Army chaplain
3 Gush forth
4 Presidential workplace
5 Chucks
6 Outbreak
7 Junkie
8 Destructive Hindu deity

9 Those north of the 49th

10 Curves

11 Police officer's patrol route

13 Snow carriage

18 Wrestling maneuvers

26 Enter stealthily

28 Provide new equipment

29 Long feathery scarf

31 Get lost!

32 Minor chessman

33 Smile

34 Federal farming regulator

35 Confront

36 Channel revived as Heartland

40 --- King Cole

45 Engraved with acid

48 Salty

50 Montreal ---, now the Washington Nationals

51 Gray matter

53 Breastplate of Zeus or Athena

54 Brigham Young University city

55 Antique auto

56 Depositors' protective grp.

57 Longtime "Tonight Show" host Jay

59 Rounds
- CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWERS
- Across:** 1 Ups, 4 Thou, 8 Scab, 12 Naps, 14 Hens, 15 Hare, 16 Idol, 17 Eases, 19 Inca, 20 True, 21 Overt, 22 Vest, 23 Yeti, 24 Vet, 25 Read, 27 Gras, 29 Bad, 30 I S P, 33 Bushel, 36 Tong, 37 Aha, 38 E S T, 39 Tonnage, 41 Now, 42 A D A, 43 Of an, 44 Lies on, 46 Man, 47 Off, 48 Sent, 49 Del, 51 Bah, 52 Cape, 56 Flux, 58 Carlo, 60 Hers, 61 Depp, 62 E-mail, 63 Egos, 64 Into, 65 Mind, 66 Dive, 67 Coos, 68 Ones, 69 Sox.
Down: 1 Unity, 2 Padre, 3 Spout, 4 The Oval Office, 5 Heaves, 6 Onset, 7 User, 8 Shiva, 9 Canadians, 10 Arcs, 11 Beat, 13 Sleigh, 18 Strangleholds, 26 Edge in, 28 Retool, 29 Boa, 31 Shoo, 32 Pawn, 33 Beam, 34 U S D A, 35 Stand up to, 36 T N N, 40 Nat, 45 Etched, 48 Saline, 50 Expos, 51 Brain, 53 Aegis, 54 Provo, 55 Essex, 56 F D I C, 57 Leno, 59 Ammo.
- SUDOKO SOLUTION
- Sudoku solution from August 18, 2021
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| 4 | 5 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 | 7 | 6 |
-
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NOTL Tennis Club completes women's doubles

Local Staff

The NOTL Tennis Club held its second annual men's and ladies doubles tournament over four days last week, with the finals being played on Saturday and Sunday.

After missing a year of tournament play due to COVID-19 restrictions, everyone looked forward to some competitive action on the courts, with lots of hard-fought battles and great points along the way, all enjoyed by the enthusiastic spectators.

Results of the women's doubles tournament are:

A division champions:
Fran Doran and
Sonja Schindeler

A division finalists:
Kathy Goodin and
Kendra Osa

B division champions:
Amanda Thackray and
Sarah Barnes

B division finalists:
Sunni Cao and
Christy Pennington

A consolation champions:
Anne Robinson and
Shirley Rednall

A consolation finalists:
Mary Lou Turner and
Dorothy Booth

B consolation champions:
Trish Spagnoll and
Nancy Marchese

B consolation finalists:
Natalie Early and
Coral MacKenzie



Fran Doran, Sonja Schindeler, Kendra Osa and Kathy Goodin. (Photos by Marilyn Francis)



Sarah Barnes, Amanda Thackray, Sunni Cao and Christy Pennington.



Zeny Umoquit



Amanda Thackray



Christy Pennington



Kendra Osa



Danna McDonough



Sunni Cao

Beautiful day for racing



Sunday morning was race day for the NOTL Sailing Club, with some of its members taking advantage of the weather and racing to Port Weller. (Photo supplied)